

山水
SHANSHUI

The World of the Mountains

René Böll

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By; René Böll

For me, experiencing nature is always a wonder and I rediscover its richness every day. I try to live and work as a *pictor doctus* similar to the *wen ren* in China. I use sketches as an inspiration not as an display an exact place. For me colour is material and immaterial at the same time, it eludes precise definition, it is so wonderfully ambiguous - it belongs to the physical world without really being material.

When I travel, I draw studies of nature in small sketchbooks, but these serve more to engage intensively with the landscape than to use it as a model. They serve to absorb the landscape, to experience and feel it, to become part of the landscape. For me, the connection between water and mountains is particularly inspiring. I find this connection particularly in Ireland, but also on the Galápagos Islands.

The first mountain in my life I saw in my life, I was 6 years old, – I am a typical resident of the lowland – was this mountain on Achill Island, the Slieve-more this is Irish and means great mountain.

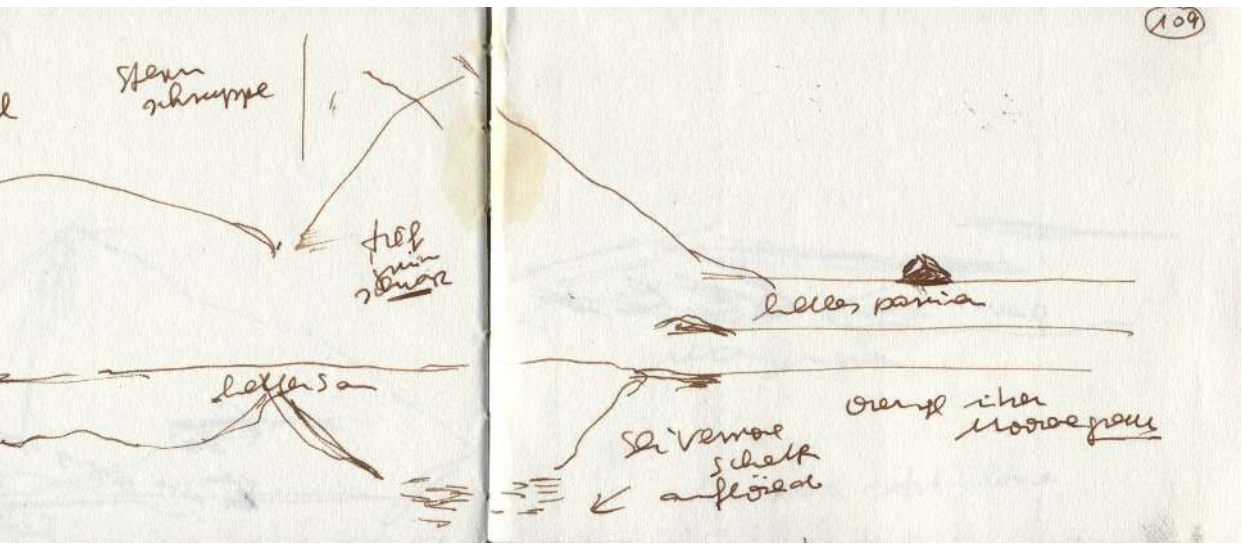
A small mountain lake on Achill Island has become my favored place and I have spent many hours and nights there in solitude and seclusion. I visited the lake in sunshine, rain, storm and dense fog. For me it has the same importance as the Monte Victoire for Paul Cezanne, I paint it several times.

Keem Bay on Achill Island famous through Instagram and the Film *The Banshees of Inisherin* a spoiled place in summer time – as Hans Magnus Enzensberger wrote: The tourist destroys what he is looking for by finding it. (Picture 03)

Slievemore,

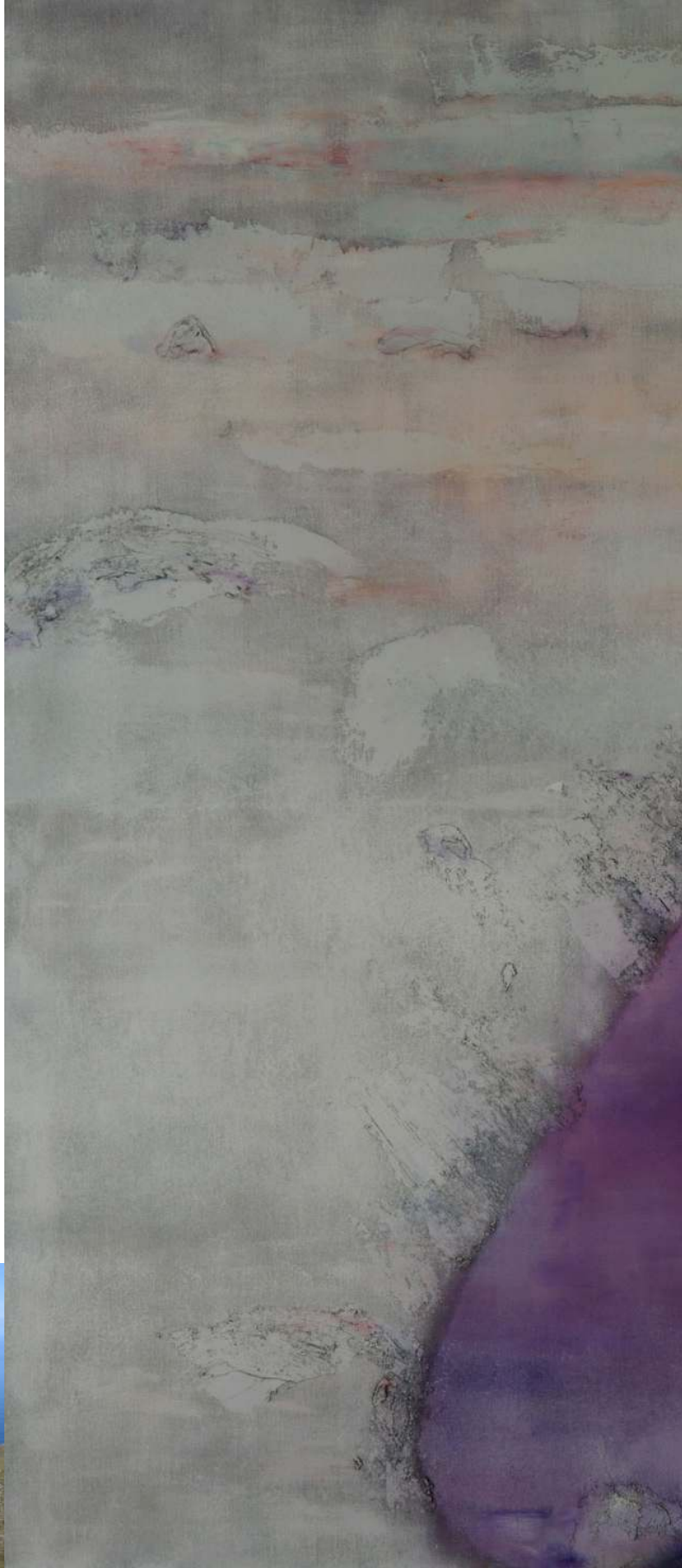
Achill Island





*Small mountain
lake,*

Achill Island







Keem Bay,
Achill Island



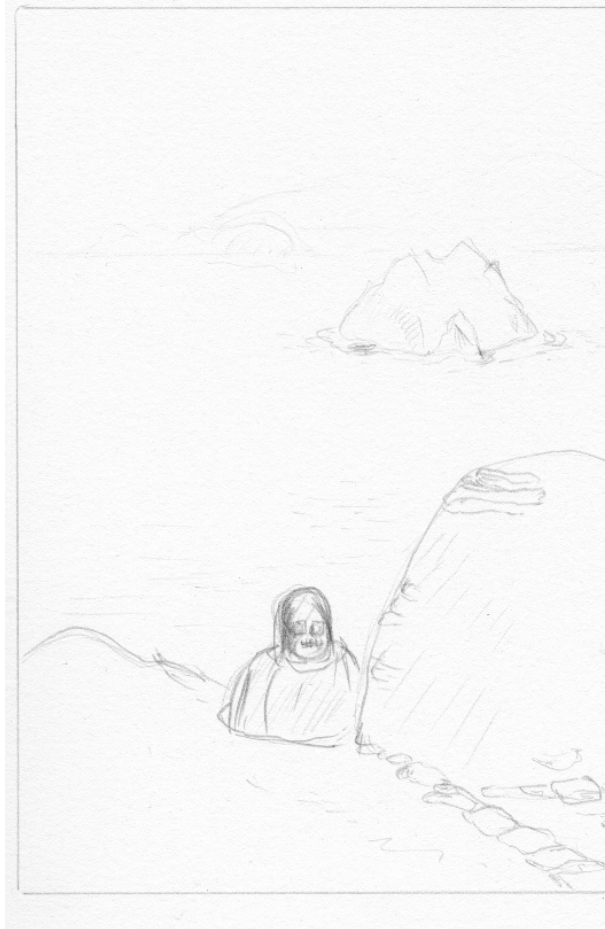
A very special experience was traveling to the Skellig Island on the Atlantic coast in South Ireland, an island 12 kilometers outside the coast with a monastery 200 Meters above sea level built in the 6th century. It's really a magical place.

Good pictures deliver something that cannot be obtained outside this medium and defies explanation through words, they have their own specific way of perception, they need no explanation and no translation into another language. Landscapes as archaic, idiosyncratic and un adapted as they may seem in today's art scene are sometimes reminiscent of a time when communication with nature was an important step towards becoming human in European and East Asian culture too.

These landscapes radiate tranquillity and solitude. They are places that are far removed from the distracting and wearing effects of noisy civilization.

The retreat into nature was not only an important way to find oneself in Chinese Taoism, but also in the mysticism of the Middle Ages the retreat into solitude was an important step towards self-knowledge. This shows the Croagh Patrick, the holy mountain of Ireland, its told that the St. Patricks fasted and meditated there for 40 days. A pilgrimage is made in July many people climb barefoot. We climbed first in the early sixties, when the pilgrimage was done at night, today it is prohibited during the night before many people were injured even died.

In recent years I have also been studying the Cillíní, the secret cemeteries for children who died unbaptized on Achill Island, Ireland. These cemeteries are located in remote valleys, on small hills.



Skellig Island





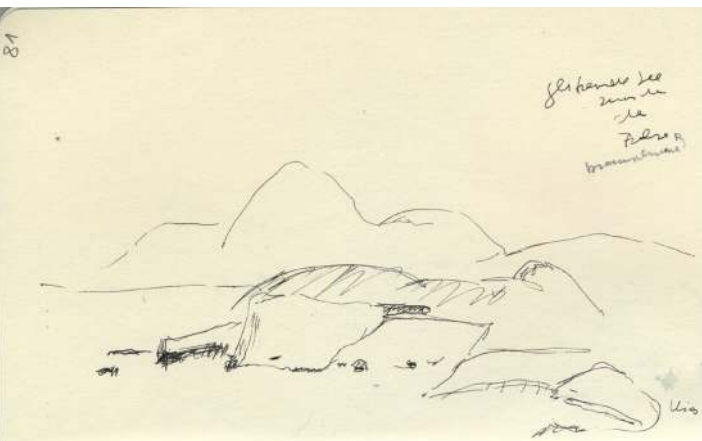
I also wrote some poetry about the Cillíní.

Very important were my journeys to South America specially Ecuador and Bolivia, at the foot of the Chimborazo, the mountain is more than 6300 Meters high and the summit is the place the furthest away from the center of the earth, in the early 1980s was a village of the so called “hieleros” – the icemen of the Chimborazo. The people climb the mountain to get ice blocks from the glaciers and sell the ice on the market. A tradition dating back

in pre-Inca times. The last one to do so died on in September 2024. One picture shows the poet and songwriter of the village. Also children were climbing the mountain.

The Illiniza Twins. The highest mountain Illiniza Norte in Ecuador on the right, 5100 Meters, I have climbed in my life.

Around 1977 together with my wife in our little publishing house we published the book of Domitila Barrios de Chungara *Let Me Speak*, a book about the life and the political fight of Domitila, a women living in the famous tin mine Siglo XX, of Bolivia about 4500 Meters above sea level. Later on, in 1980, I was invited to participate at a political meeting of the tin miners in the famous and I took photos of Artemio Camargo Crespo, who in 1981 was later on killed together with seven comrades by the fascist militia police in La Paz, Bolivia during the regimen of Banzer. There is a monument in La Paz for Artemio and his comrades using my photo.



Croagh Patrick





Cillíní





Hieleros

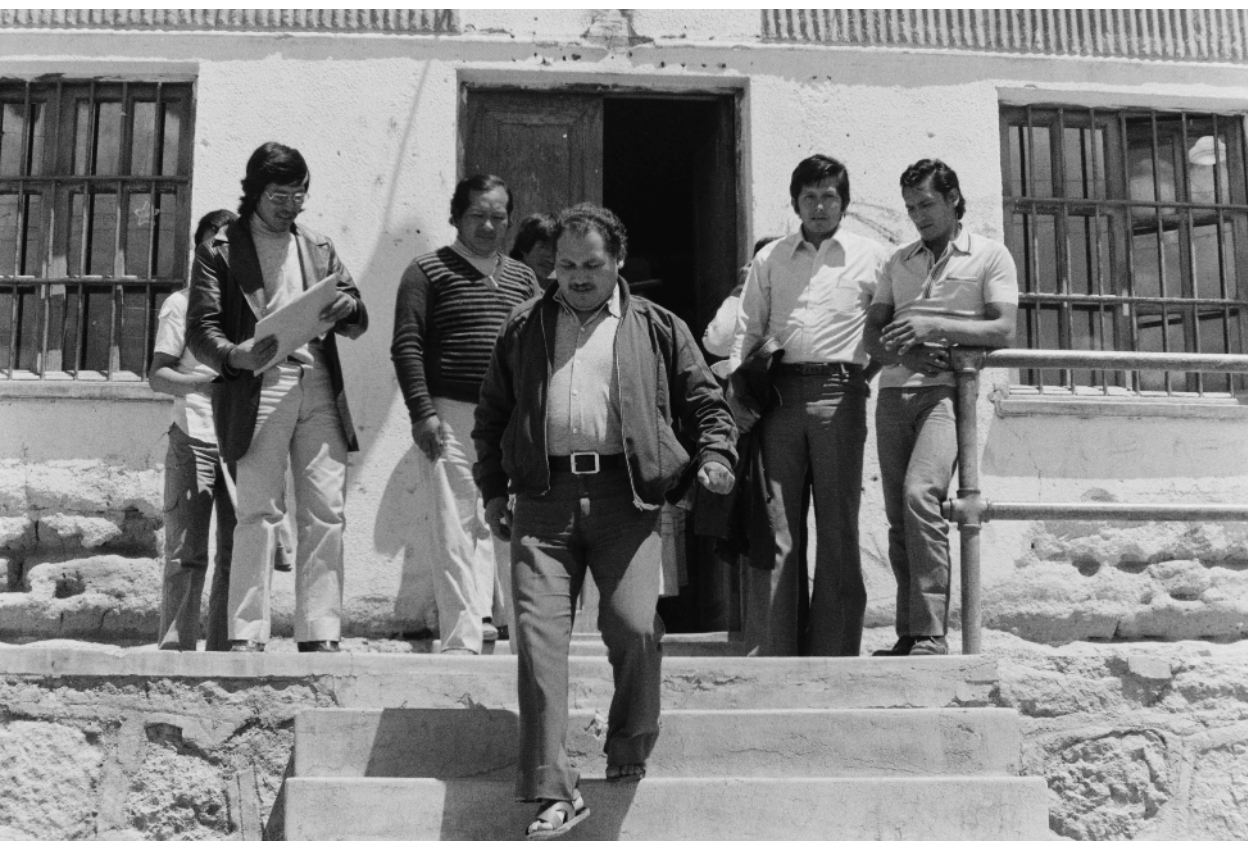
Mt. Chimborazo





Mt. Illiniza Norte

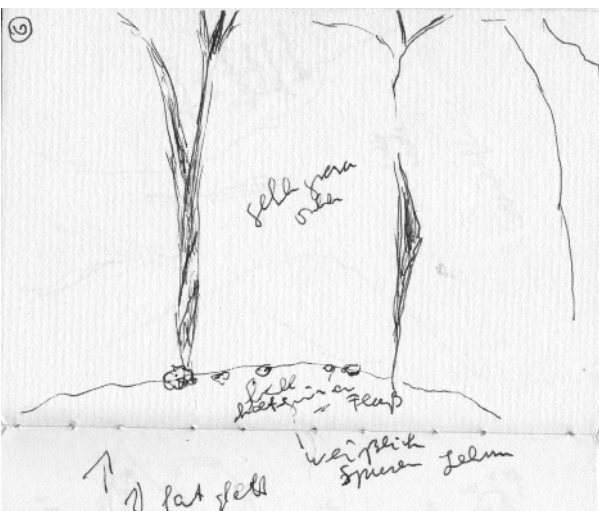
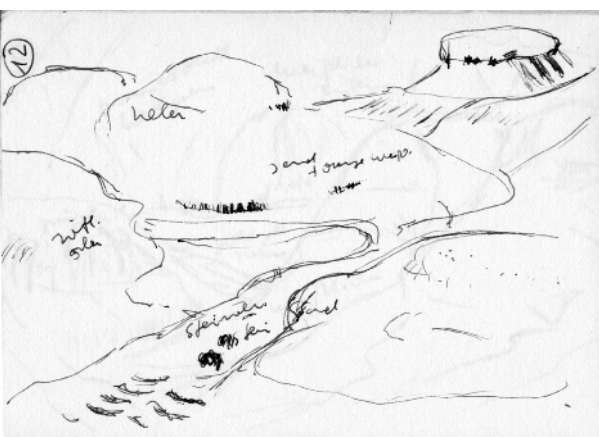
Artemio Camargo Crespo



The other photos show the blind miners Sigo XX, blind because of the delayed dynamite explosions.

In 1997 I made a study trip with my colleague Gu Gan, a Chinese calligrapher and we painted in situ in the Gobi Desert and in the grottos of Dunhuang in Gansu on the silk road.

In 2009 I worked together with Gu Gan on painting with citations of Hölderlin in his studio in Beijing.



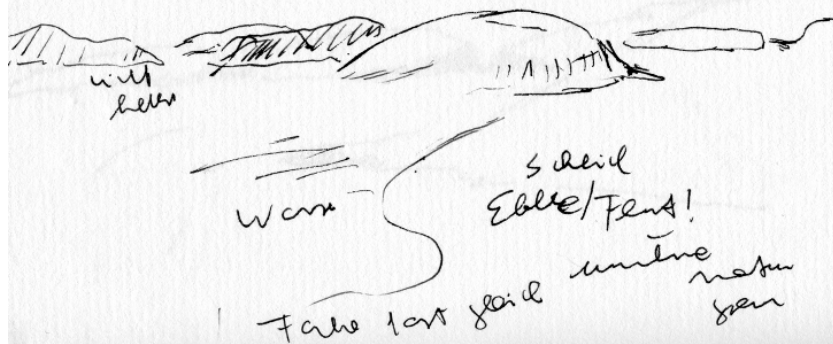
Gobi Desert





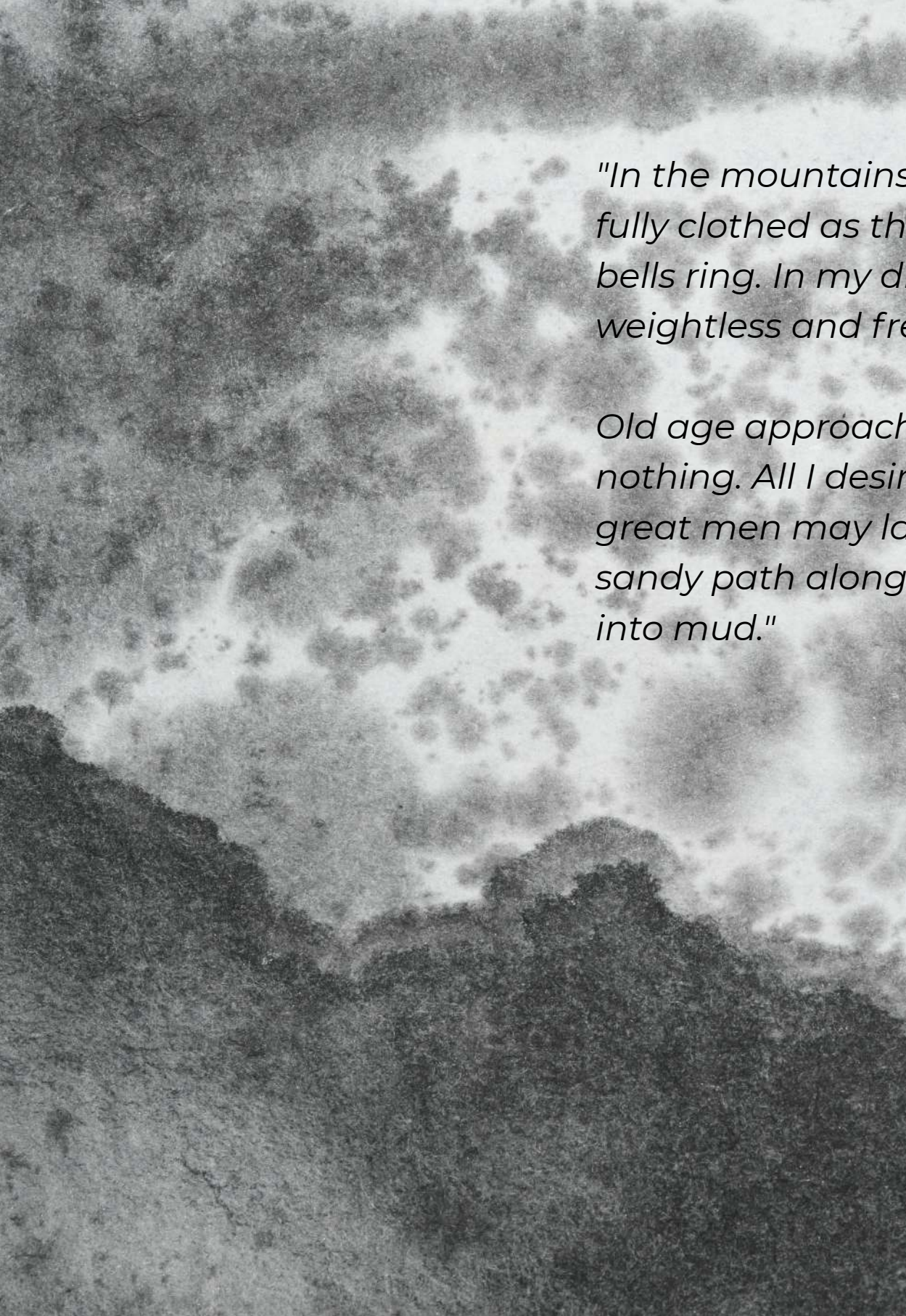


Dunhuang Grottos



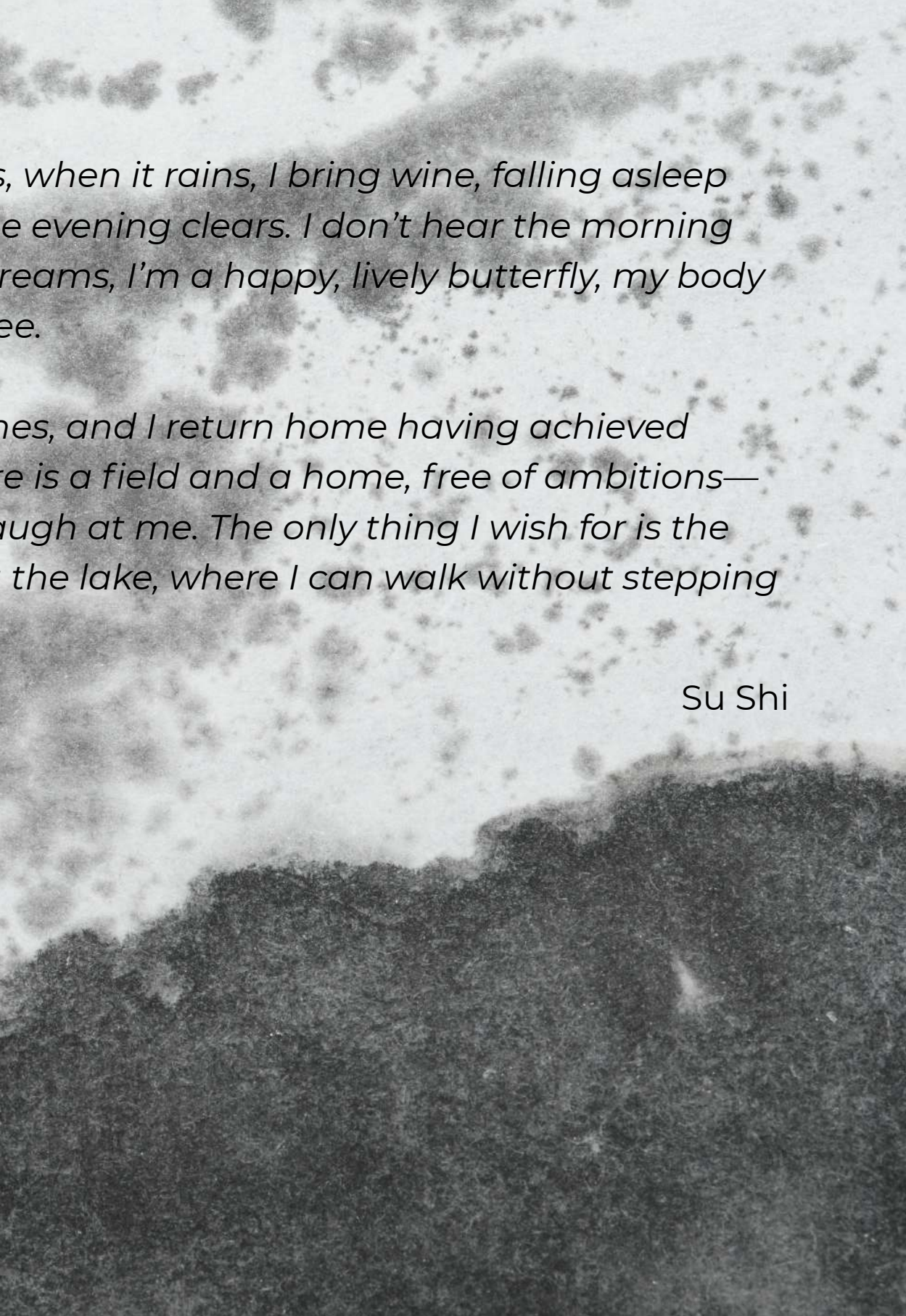


Hölderlin citations

A black and white photograph of a mountain landscape. The foreground shows dark, textured mountain slopes. The middle ground features more distant, lighter mountain peaks. The sky is filled with large, billowing clouds, creating a dramatic and atmospheric scene. The overall tone is somber and contemplative.

*"In the mountains
fully clothed as the
bells ring. In my dream
weightless and free"*

*Old age approaches
nothing. All I desire
great men may leave
sandy path along
into mud."*



s, when it rains, I bring wine, falling asleep
e evening clears. I don't hear the morning
reams, I'm a happy, lively butterfly, my body
ee.

nes, and I return home having achieved
re is a field and a home, free of ambitions—
ough at me. The only thing I wish for is the
the lake, where I can walk without stepping

Su Shi